

Packing a Bear-Resistant Food Canister

With forethought and planning, it's amazing how much food you can fit into a canister. If you choose the right foods and repackage them, you can maximize canister space. It takes a little effort and time but the results are rewarding.

Remember, when you are using a canister ALL scented items - food, toiletries and garbage - must fit inside the canister *throughout your entire trip unless you are in attendance or actively preparing your food.*

How to Do It

- **Choose** the right foods.
- **Measure** out every meal.
- **Repackage** your food and toiletries into baggies or small containers.
- **Carry the first two meals outside of the canister:** lunch and dinner.
- At the trailhead, **make sure that ALL food, trash, toiletries and scented items will fit inside the canister the first night.**
- Put the canister and your kitchen 50 feet from your sleeping area. **Leave the canister on the ground.** Do not hang the canister from a tree.

Food Choices

Choose foods that are compact, compressible and high in calories. This includes rice, tortillas, jerky, flat pastas, dehydrated powders, nuts, dried fruits, peanut butter, candy and nutritional bars. Since you are trying to put as much food in the canister that you can, think about volume when you purchase food. For example, instead of bread rolls, buy tortillas. Instead of macaroni, choose spaghetti. You get the picture - don't waste space on bulky food items.

Plan Your Menu

Carefully count every meal that you will be eating. By doing this, you will save weight and space. Put all the food on a table and plan each meal, snack, drink and condiment. Pre-measure and pre-mix food.

Repackage Your Food

Take food out of its original package. This allows you to fit more food inside a canister and reduces the amount of garbage you generate. Repackage food from boxes, bottles, jars and cans into resealable plastic bags. These bags are flexible and fit into small spaces. Force air out of packages. Poke tiny holes in freeze-dried packages to release the air. Save instructions for cooking and put inside meal bags. Write food contents on outside of bags with a permanent marker.

Toiletries

Pack toiletries similarly to foods. **Put toothpaste, soap, sunscreen, bug repellent, etc. into small containers.** Stores sell small, lightweight plastic containers that work well for this. Don't take more than you need.

Benefits of Using a Canister

- Less stress, increased peace of mind
 - More time at camp to relax instead of thinking of ways to store food
 - Guaranteed food supply if bears or other animals visit your camp
 - No aborted trips because bears ate your food
 - Freedom to camp anywhere: above treeline or away from food storage lockers
 - No need to search for the right tree or carry ropes and food sacs for counter-balancing
 - More time at camp to relax instead of thinking of ways to store food
 - A small table to use, something to sit on
 - Increased safety for you and protection of wild animals
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Suggested Food Items

Cheese
Jerky
Sliced meats
Tortillas, pita bread
Gorp, Trail mix
Raisins, nuts
Dried fruit, candy

Spaghetti, flat pasta
Rice
Dehydrated beans
vegetables, soups
sauces
Nutrition bars
Peanut butter

Freeze dried meals
Packaged food
Condiment packets
Oatmeal
Powdered milk
Instant coffee
Tea

This information was provided by our friends at the Inyo National Forest.